

City Council Minutes
Special Meeting
March 10, 2025 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor Igor Zarembo called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Council present: Mayor Igor ZAREMBA, Deputy Mayor Mary LEITH, Travis RIESNER, Stormie MITCHELL

Council present via Zoom: Pete HALLGREN, Lance STRICKLIN

Council excused: Michael PRESTEGARD

City staff present: City Administrator Lori Roberts, Finance Officer Kaylee Reiersen,
Library Director Tiki Levinson

Public present: At least a dozen people were physically present with another 16 on Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chris Morley referenced the EMS Agreement, sections 4b and 10c, attached to Ordinance 2025-05 and said Rural Alaska Emergency Services (RAES) manages funds collected from the community, but “in the event the funds are not sufficient to make the required payments set forth in the Fee Schedule, the City will ... make up the difference.” Morley disagreed with turning over any donations to RAES because they are a “closed group” and not affiliated with the City of Delta Junction. He expressed concerns with unpaid liabilities and lawsuits. He questioned why mutual aid with Fort Greely ends March 13th before the DMT contract expires (March 31st). Is Fort Greely colluding with DMT to influence the City to contract with DMT and RAES? Referring to Exhibit A of the EMS Agreement, Morley asked why the southern borders stretch to the Denali Highway (past Black Rapids, Summit Lake, and Paxson) when the State of Alaska and the military have a joint response plan for remote areas. Morley asked the Council to vote against Ordinance 2025-05 because he believed RAES cannot raise enough funds locally, which will result in taxation.

Zarembo said RAES needs to commit a certain price. Donations toward ambulance services, plus landfill contributions are allocated to EMS as stated in Exhibit C, paragraph 4b, to pay the City’s \$46,000 portion.

Mitchell agreed to not hand over donations to RAES. She said she has received a lot of calls from people who will donate only to support Chris Morley’s plan. She reported 20 people have been laid off from jobs at Fort Greely and there is no certainty that they can make their house payments.

LTC Keith Marshall, Fort Greely Garrison Commander, said there is a difference between people getting laid off and people choosing to leave. Civilians were asked if they wanted to participate in a deferred resignation program (resign now and get paid through the end of the fiscal year). It is not known if there will be a program to reduce forces, whether Fort Greely is growing or downsizing. One of President Trump’s highest priorities is the Golden Dome for America (a concept to further the goals of peace and deterring adversaries from attacks on the homeland) which Fort Greely is a part of.

Discussion followed regarding potential answers but no solution to extending ambulance services after March 31, the City not having sustainable income to pay for the million-dollar contract, one-quarter of the community’s population residing inside the City limits and three-quarters outside, concerns about expenses and hiring more employees should the City operate the ambulance service.

LTC Keith Marshall reported it is not beneficial to the government to cancel the (EMS and fire) Mutual Aid Agreement. They extended it to March 31 because the ALS level of service was intact.

Cody White stated the goal of the contract was for an interim period to keep the ambulance service from lapsing. The faster an agreement is in place, the faster the transition. RAES committed to work with the City, not hang them out to dry.

Zarembo said the City cannot foot the whole million-dollar bill. He asked RAES to commit to a dollar amount.

Cody White said RAES’ sole purpose is to provide financial assistance. Locals must show community involvement. Corporate donations will not happen until the public commits. RAES cannot commit to a number without community support.

Mitchell said contractors do not budget contributions, so do not expect a lot from them, especially with the layoffs. She reported she is part of the Deltana Community Corporation (DCC) EMS Board and has attended their

meetings for several months. DCC is actively involved in trying to find a solution, but to her knowledge, RAES has never reached out to DCC.

Cody White reported they were told during a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting that DCC had \$47,000 to donate but were waiting for someone to match it.

Zaremba reported DCC needs time to get it approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance 2025-05, An Ordinance Approving an Agreement with Rural Alaska Emergency Services and Delta Medical Transport for Emergency Medical Services

Stricklin said DMT is the only viable option because they have boots on the ground.

Roberts reported the year-long contract with DMT will allow time for the City to transition to own and operate the ambulance service. The contract must be in place by March 31st.

Leith said if the public does not contribute to EMS, there will not be an ambulance service.

Zaremba agreed to a one-year contract with DMT. He suggested going back to negotiations to determine who writes the check, the City, RAES, or both.

Motion: Hallgren moved to introduce Ordinance 2025-05 and set the public hearing, second reading, and adoption for March 18, 2025; Stricklin seconded.

Motion failed on a roll call with three voting in favor (Leith, Stricklin, Hallgren) and three opposed (Mitchell, Riesner, Zaremba).

ADJOURNMENT – 5:46pm

Igor Zaremba, Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: April 1, 2025